

# GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

NOVEMBER 2015 VOLUME 6 ISSUE 11

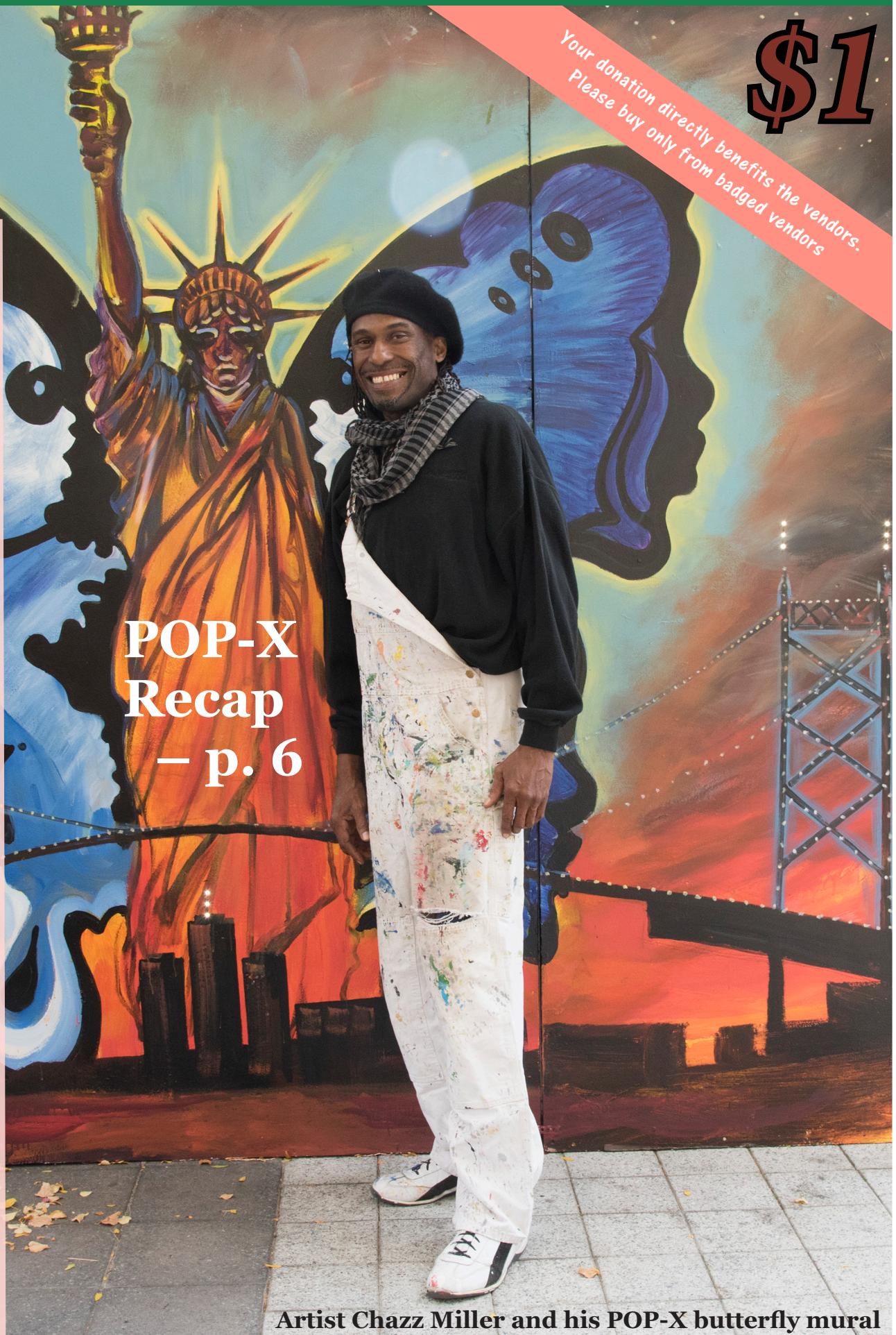
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Artist Chazz Miller and his POP-X butterfly mural

## Mindfulness and gratitude



by Susan Beckett  
Publisher

Trained to spot problems, I'm much more prone to remark on my anemic eggplants and the lethargic tomato crop than on the abundance of delicious, organic apples my backyard tree produced or the volunteer acorn squash that appeared in my garden; to notice the minutes when I am in pain rather than the hours in which my body supports me perfectly.

Luckily, I can train myself to appreciate. Gratitude was the subject of the fourth session of the Mindfulness Training offered to Groundcover News vendors and volunteers. We practiced meditat-

ing on gratitude and were given a journal and instructed that each day we were to write down three things for which we were grateful.

Though I did not do the exercise faithfully, even my brief attention to gratitude has opened me to further appreciation of the world and its inhabitants – including myself. Here are some of my journal entries:

*I'm grateful to have a comfortable bed to sleep in.*

*I'm grateful my breath comes easily and strong.*

*I'm grateful there are people in my life I care about.*

*I'm grateful there are people who care for me.*

*I'm grateful I can meet my own needs, that my left leg and arm are strong and able;*

*I'm grateful I don't have to do everything on my own.*

*I'm grateful for the jewel-like leaves backlit by dramatic cloud-filled skies.*

*I'm grateful for soothing sunsets.*

*I'm grateful that the kids in crosswalks are carrying musical instruments.*

*I'm grateful the university provides so many opportunities for me to learn.*

*I'm grateful*

*Sister Simone Campbell will be speaking at St. Mary's on December 3.*

*I'm grateful that so many talented people contribute to the common good.*

*I'm grateful to*

*live in Ann Arbor.*

And I'm grateful to *you* for supporting Groundcover News and reading this column – it has provided me with a framework for noticing, expressing and expanding my gratitude for the incredible gifts of life that abound in our community. I wish you all a Thanksgiving that expands your outlook rather than your waistband.

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## GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

*Creating opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.*

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## Remember a Vendor!

by Elizabeth "Lit" Kurtz  
Vendor #159

Please don't forget us as we stand on the side of the road, or we may freeze as the temperatures drop this winter. While for the most part vendors try to be jovial, friendly, and amicable, it must not be forgotten that this paper can serve as a lifeline for those of us whose lives are on the edge and that we are still vulnerable and at risk of succumbing to the bitter realities of homelessness, the greatest of these being exposure and hunger. Very often our lives depend on whether a sale is made. Even during the harshest winter months, not all vendors are able to connect with the local shelter for services.

I have witnessed vendors standing for hours trying to sell enough papers to buy a meal. I know of a vendor who needs to make enough sales in a week to supply gas money to a relative so that he doesn't lose his job. I personally make a quota to secure a nightly place in the hotel where I now reside at a negotiated weekly rate.

Sales ability plays a role, and while we are fortunate enough to have Joe Woods, a talented and experienced salesperson serve as sales manager, salesmanship should not be the sole factor in one's decision to buy a paper. Every vendor has a purpose, a hope, a dream and perhaps a right to gain traction in getting out of her or his circumstances. Whether your vendor laughs and jokes or simply stands and mumbles, we all need support to re-

main viable and be given hope that we can emerge from our plights.

So while this is a wonderful paper, it can be considered much more than just a purchase – it is also an opportunity to engage and understand another person's struggles. It is a chance to fill a need or to encourage others to become supporters. As the cold weather approaches, it is more important than ever to focus on the critical needs of vendors whose needs run the gamut from food and shelter to transportation. A single sale may mean the difference in someone having a miserably cold night or being able to purchase propane in order to

survive the frigidly cold night temperatures of a Michigan winter.

As is often the case, the demands of life cause important activities to slip our minds. That's why we should perhaps focus on what message caused Pope Francis' trip to the United States to be a success. That is, to "remember the poor." So as the temperatures drop and the demands of life take up much of your time, please try to make a concerted effort to find a vendor and purchase a Groundcover paper – and maybe one for a friend.



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## Remembering time



by Rev. Dr. Martha  
Brunell  
Groundcover  
Contributor

Among my many favorite children's stories is *Frederick* by Leo Lionni. Frederick's family of chatty field mice inhabit a stone wall. In late fall Frederick's family members are all hastily gathering up seeds, nuts, and the remains of grain from the fields. They know there is a long, hungry winter ahead. Next to them Frederick appears to be doing nothing. When asked why he is not working, Frederic replies that he is filling up with the sun's rays, colors and words. What Frederick holds in his memory will prove to be as essential to the mice's winter survival as their assembled stockpiles of food.

November is a month when we review memories. Any who dread winter's pending arrival may, like Frederick, hoard the recalled warmth of spring and summer. Thanksgiving practices of gratitude are another form that our remembering takes this time of year. Gift upon gift is acknowledged. There is also the ritual memory of All Saints and All Souls Days, the Day of the Dead, Totenfest, and other memorial celebrations. Ritual memories of those we have loved whose shaping influence is there to be seen and felt in our lives cause me to consider additional holders of memory. There are places, objects, books and films, pieces of art, specific tasks, hours of the day or seasons of the year with which we have long connections. Often over time, they, like human connections, mold and transform us.

My remembering attention this November turns toward Annie's valentine from 1991. Annie is an artist friend who lives in Saint Louis. Each

February hundreds of us await the arrival of the current year's valentine designed by Annie.

Her 1991 valentine changed who I was then and continues nearly 25 years later to offer up new perspectives for me. The 1991 valentine arrived on the heels of Desert Storm. I had an unusual response that winter. The rhetoric in the media, the number of young Vermonters called up in the National Guard, and the extensive coverage of civilian injury, casualty, and loss brought me to a place where I had no words. In over 40 years of talking in ministry, before and after Desert Storm, I have never experienced such an absence of word. I didn't have anything to say.

On a cold February morning in Burlington, Vt., I retrieved Annie's valentine from the mailbox. It was printed in a rose shade of pink on eight-and-a-half by eleven cream-colored paper. The design resembled a medieval triptych, a three-paneled piece of art, customarily found on an altar. The lower left side panel featured a humble dandelion. The high, arched center panel caught the dandelion when it released heart-shaped seeds inscribed with the word "peace." The lower right side panel showed the scattered descent of those seeds across the Middle East. Almost singlehandedly, Annie's valentine helped me to find words again. The power of poetic process and expression, not argument or debate, or a sense of who was right and who was wrong, heard me back into speech.

I have kept Annie's many valentines over the years. A few have been placed in inexpensive frames, some serve as bookmarks and others are buried in a file or attached as an illustration for a program I once offered. The 1991 valentine was in a file and then in a simple plastic frame. I propped it up in front of me while I was writing

about poetic process for my doctor of ministry degree at the beginning of this century.

Eventually, when I lived in Ann Arbor, I had that valentine, a companion for 22 years at that point, placed in a beautiful frame that conceals its yellowing edges. It hangs in my home where I see it repeatedly every day. It has gone to church with me and made an appearance last month at a retreat I facilitated. Years after it arrived, it is an icon of poetic process for me in addition to being a reminder of the many times I have called myself a seed thrower in life and ministry.

I love to voice creative ideas, sending them out to be surprised by which ones take root and flourish, even in a fashion I haven't imagined. On days when I am discouraged about the immensity of issues facing us in the world, I see in all those heart-shaped seeds a network of courageous, thoughtful, and perhaps small actors and actions changing a local scene. Any one of those actions and those carrying them out may tip a life-sustaining balance for all of us.

Just recently, the valentine has taken me in the direction of how we are like the seeds on that seed head, blown who knows where and challenged to take root and to shoot up with green strength. The layers of my connection with that one valentine have accumulated as the years have passed. Not unlike Frederick's sun rays, colors and words, its presence with me has helped me to survive well.

Sometime in this remembering month of November, consider people, places, objects, books or films, pieces of art, specific tasks, hours of day or seasons of the year or anything else that has impacted you over the long haul. Pause to recognize the connection and who you have become because of it. And then draw strength from the remembering.

## GROUNDCOVER

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# AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

## Washtenaw County Department of Veterans Affairs: veteran advocates

by Olivia Perfetti  
U-M Student Contributor

There are currently over 17,000 veterans living in Washtenaw County. Although the county has many organizations that aim to support the men and women who have served our country, it can be difficult for veterans to find these resources and take advantage of them.

The Washtenaw County Department of Veterans Affairs (WCDVA) was formed in order to make certain resources and programs more readily available to veterans. The department's specific mission is "to provide accurate, efficient and timely services to ensure delivery of benefits to veterans and their families." These services mainly include assisting veterans, survivors and dependents in filing for government benefits. These benefits include disability compensation, pension, financial assistance (in paying for housing, utilities, medical expenses and transportation expenses), education, insurance and home loan guarantees.

Relief for veterans in the state of Michigan first began in 1899 when the state legislature enacted Public Act 214, titled "The Veterans' Relief Fund." This act provided relief funds for honorably discharged veterans and also provided for the Soldiers Relief Commission, which until recently played a role in evaluating which veterans were eligible for funds.

In 1953, the State issued Public Act 191, titled the "County Department of Veterans Affairs." This allowed for the creation of county departments of veterans affairs throughout the state of Michigan. This act gave local departments jurisdiction over the Veterans Relief Fund. Thus, the current Washtenaw County Department of Veterans Affairs derived from the Soldiers Relief Commission.

However, there are still counties in Michigan that have no accredited veterans service officers. Since the current director of the Washtenaw County DVA, Mr. Michael G. Smith, Jr., began working with the Department in 1997, the number of counties without departments of veterans affairs has dropped from 24 to seven.

When asked about the office environment, Smith said, "You can hear in the hallways some very loud exclamations. People yell 'yes!' when [they find out] their client has received veterans benefits. We develop friendships. There is a camaraderie there [between the service officers and the clients], because many of us are veterans ourselves."

"It's tremendous in this environment to be an advocate of the veterans. You know, sometimes they see us as the VA [United States Department of Veterans



**Director Michael G. Smith (center) stands with his staff at the Washtenaw County Department of Veterans Affairs.**

Affairs]," he added with a chuckle. "But nope, we aren't the VA, we're even better. Because we are their advocates. Sometimes, we even know the rules and regulations of the VA better than their own employees. We sometimes have to educate our VA counterparts."

Smith also had some touching stories about veterans he worked with and the ways in which the department was able to help them through difficult times.

For example, Smith worked with a veteran who had not been able to work since 1985 due to post-traumatic stress disorder. The veteran was having trouble getting the benefits he needed from the county and federal government. He contacted Smith, who created a compelling case for the veteran and convinced the VA to award him individual unemployability, which means that he was paid disability compensation at the 100 percent rate. The veteran's retroactive payment totaled over \$100,000. The man was able to buy his dream home across from the Huron River. He still mails Smith the "Laughing Buck" local newspaper, photos of the deer in his backyard, and news of how he and his wife are doing.

Another case was that of a veteran who had been stationed at the Eglin Air Force base in Florida, 10 miles northeast of Site C-52A, where chemical defoliants, including Agent Orange (most notoriously used in the Vietnam War), were tested. According to Smith, the amount of dioxin sprayed at the test site was more than the total amount of dioxin sprayed in Vietnam during the course of the war. The chemicals caused the veteran to develop multiple myeloma and prostate cancer. The VA initially denied his application for disability, so Smith helped the veteran appeal his case to the Board of Veteran Appeals in Washington, D.C. Smith used the military's technical definition of "exposure" (a Vietnamese town was defined as "exposed" if it was within 10 kilometers of where the dioxin was sprayed) to win the veteran 100 percent

disability in addition to a \$158,000 retroactive payment for the multiple myeloma and a \$20-30 thousand retroactive payment for treatment of the prostate cancer.

Smith also had a client who was dependent

on a pension from the VA. One year, the VA (on an income verification match) found that the veteran had income that they claimed he did not report. However, the income was from a program called "compensated work therapy," which is a therapy program run by the VA hospitals. In its own records, the VA defines that income as not reportable, meaning that the veteran did not need to report that income. Unfortunately, the VA failed to recognize this and stopped the veteran's pension. He had no money or way of repaying his debt to the government. According to Smith, the veteran even contemplated suicide. Through a series of investigations into VA records, Smith discovered the VA's mistake. The VA cleared the client's debt and reinstated his pension. He also successfully

applied for social security.

These stories show only a few instances in which the WCDVA has changed the lives of veterans in Washtenaw County. When asked what the most rewarding part of his job was, Smith replied, "The relationships we have with them that we develop over the years. You know, most disabilities get worse over time, so the VA has to evaluate their disabilities [many times over]. I have veterans from 1998 who are still in contact with me. Sometimes they come and take me out to lunch. The hard part, though, is losing them. I lost one very recently... he took me out to dinner on a Monday... and I got a call from his cousin on Friday. She called me to let me know that he had passed away."

Smith later added: "None of us do this 'cause we're gonna get rich off of it. We're not lawyers who charge 20 percent [of the benefits received by veterans]. We tell them, when you get your retro [retroactive payment], it's all yours. That's the beauty of it."

Smith would like to encourage veterans, survivors and dependents to make sure they contact the Washtenaw County Department of Veterans Affairs if they need assistance of any kind.

Contact the WCDVA by telephone: (734) 973-4540; through their website: [www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/veteran\\_services/vs\\_location.html](http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/veteran_services/vs_location.html); or by stopping by their Ann Arbor office located at 2155 Hogback Road.



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# If they are kids, why are they sentenced to die in Michigan prisons?



by Angie Martell  
Groundcover  
Contributor

Currently, over 350 children as young as 13 are sentenced to die in Michigan prisons. One in five has been in prison 25 years or longer. Over 2,500 children are currently sentenced to die in United States prisons. Approximately 60 percent of these children are first-time offenders.

Many of these children are serving life sentences, otherwise known as life without parole. Many were sentenced for crimes committed at an age where it is questionable whether they have the adequate understanding to truly comprehend the situation or the possible consequences of their actions. Many of these children were accomplices in crimes in which an adult individual was involved and charged with committing the crime.

In Michigan, not only can a child of any age be tried as an adult, but Michigan excludes 17-year-olds from juvenile treatment altogether. Children can be sent to prison even though they are not considered responsible enough to live away from their parents, drive, vote, leave school, sign contracts, use alcohol, serve on juries or be drafted – under the presumption that they do not have the same capacities as an adult.

When children are subject to adult punishment they can be incarcerated in adult prisons and sentenced to life without parole. A child who is charged with a crime is expected, despite their young age, to navigate and negotiate the legal system and to understand the consequences of decisions that could result in a life sentence without the possibility without parole.

The United States Supreme Court has ruled that it is unconstitutional and cruel and unusual punishment to impose a mandatory life-without-parole sentence on someone who was under the age of 18 at the time of the crime. So, if the United States Supreme Court has ruled that the death penalty and mandatory life sentences without the possibility of parole constitute cruel and unusual punishment, why has the State of Michigan not heeded the highest court of the land?

The State of Michigan has determined that the ruling does not apply retroactively and has refused to parole any

individuals currently incarcerated. The children's only hope is a pardon by the same governor who has refused to advocate for acceptance of our highest court's mandate that kids are different and should be treated differently.

## Key facts about life without parole

No other country in the world sentences children to life in prison without parole.

A report published by Human Rights Watch found that 45 percent of youth who have been sentenced to life without parole were not the ones who actually committed the crime; they had older co-defendants whose actions often were unanticipated by the child. In some cases, others committed the actual homicides.

Nearly 80 percent of the lifers witnessed violence in their homes.

More than half witnessed weekly violence in their neighborhoods.

## What is the rationale?

Part of the problem is that we are focusing on the wrong issues and looking at the issue from a blame and punishment point of view. The legal system is focused on a retributive philosophy that is hierarchical, adversarial and punitive – in other words, it is based on a rights, harms and fear-based analysis rather than on a focus on the rehabilitation and healing of offenders through accountability and reconciliation with victims and the community at large. Our present legal system maintains that because the victim suffered, the offender should suffer as well.

How many times have we heard the slogans *do the crime, do the time or an eye for an eye?* When we blame, when we fear, when we are focusing solely on the punishment, then the legal system and the rest of us move toward demonization of the other (the accused), preventing actual healing and rehabilitation.

When we demonize kids, we allow the politics of fear and anger to perpetuate and we conclude that they must pay. As a legal system we fail to look at what brings this individual before the court: what drove the person to commit this crime? We fail to look at the issue of culpability, as well: were there influences in this child's life that perhaps propelled them on this path?

## Restorative justice: "It takes a village"

Michigan spends more than \$10 million a year to house juvenile lifers – more than all but one other state, Pennsylvania. Not only does Michigan

spend more money in corrections than higher education but it also keeps its prisoners behind bars longer than the national average. We also see in our legal system different treatment based on race, educational levels and poverty.

Violence is not born in a vacuum. When we treat our children or view them as "throwaways," we relegate them to a place where it is difficult to find rehabilitation and healing because we have cast them out of our community rather than embraced them.

When people are subjected to violence early in their lives, when they live in poverty, when their educational needs are deprived, when they live in situations too terrible for many of us to imagine, then it's time to say *how can we change this situation they live in* rather than *how can we punish this person and send them away so that we are protected.*

We need to move away from blame to a solutions-based approach in our criminal justice system. The power and authority asserted by prosecutors and judges often don't serve the good of the

people, but rather serve what is good for the institution. When an institution seeks to punish and sees rehabilitation in a very homogenized way devoid of a multicultural reality, then it is doomed to not only fail, but to achieve the very opposite of what it supposedly is designed to do. We need to look at how we can help rehabilitate this person and assist this person towards a reintegration as a productive member of our community.

Let us ask ourselves the following questions: What is it that we value? Why is it that we fear? Why can't we provide more? Michigan spends over \$2 billion each year – that is \$34,000 per prisoner per year – to imprison people, yet only \$11,000 per student per year to educate children.

We must change how juveniles are sentenced under Michigan law and make sure that it comports with their constitutional rights, and we must urge the Michigan government to obey the U.S. Supreme Court's mandates and grant 350 kids currently serving life without parole in Michigan prisons a new hearing.

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# MAKING CHANGE

## Low-income community well represented at POP-X art exhibit

by Susan Beckett

Though normal activities like playing chess and gathering for pizza on Friday nights were unavailable, the low-income community was definitely present in Ann Arbor Art Center's art POP-X exhibition at Liberty Park in mid-October. Photographer Nick Azzaro lined his 10-by-10 exhibit pavilion with photographs of the people who use Liberty Park throughout the year and placed a wire-sculpture Groundcover News vendor in the center.

The sculpted Groundcover vendor is made from action figures fused together. "Everyone is a veteran of something – we've all been through something and that's why I chose the materials I did," said Azzaro.

"I wanted to make a connection between those who spend time in the plaza and those who walk by and only read about them in negative articles," Azzaro said. "It was such a pleasant experience... it was a great time and eye-opening, refreshing to sit and talk with people. I would like to encourage that more in the plaza. I'm hoping this starts something."

Social practice artist Brenda Oelbaum learned about MISSION/Mercy House as she assembled her exhibit, *Take Your Troubles To Market*. Framed by drawings of a grandmother and Greek historian Herodotus was their saying, "If we put all our troubles in bags and took them to the market to exchange them, upon seeing the problems of others we would gladly go home with

## "Poems for Change"

by Kaia Hayes  
U-M Student Contributor

Groundcover vendors and University of Michigan students alike have an opportunity for their voices to be heard at Poems for Change, a poetry reading and storytelling event hosted by the Groundcover Student Group on the university campus. The event, which is scheduled to take place Thursday, Nov. 12 at 8 p.m. in the Forum Hall Auditorium of Palmer Commons, is free and open to university students as well as the general public.

Poems for Change will feature the work of a dozen Groundcover vendors and U-M students, speaking on a wide variety of topics including intersectionality, socioeconomic status, race and other targeted identities. The student group intends the event to offer an opportunity for students to learn more about the



Nick Azzaro's POP-X photography exhibit featured the usual denizens of Liberty Park.

our own!" Below it was a pile of velvety black bags containing the slips of paper on which visitors wrote down their troubles, and the challenge: *What is your problem? Could you solve someone else's? Dare to compare?*

Oelbaum was so touched when people from Mercy House stopped by and shared their troubles that she started

lives and experiences of Groundcover vendors and fellow classmates, and to prompt continued dialogue and awareness around the issues brought to light by performers.

"We got the idea for [the event] by talking to vendors and hearing how much they enjoyed having their poetry published in the paper," said Kaia Hayes, a sophomore at U-M and vice president of the Groundcover Student Group. "We thought it would be a great way to connect students and vendors in a collaborative effort and give both groups a chance to express themselves about their experiences with all of these issues."

For more information about the event, or to submit a poem or story, please contact [GCNcontact@umich.edu](mailto:GCNcontact@umich.edu).

collecting donations for them. "This is what trouble is," Oelbaum said after talking with the Mercy House visitors. More of her work can be seen at the *Gender* exhibition at Central Michigan University. Oelbaum's *Gender* exhibition comprises various renderings of Venus, each of which is constructed from the diet books written by a different celebrity.

Kaden and Riley Jackson, two local children, were captivated by the butterflies filling and surrounding Chazz Miller's exhibit space. Miller is an art teacher and muralist who is working on a mural about immigration and migration for the International Institute of Metropolitan

Detroit (once the \$140,000 in funding is secured). Invited to fill in at the last minute, Miller borrowed from his existing body of work and made the

## Zero veteran homelessness

Great strides were made this year in the quest to house all veterans by the end of 2015. According to a September Washtenaw Housing Alliance analysis, Washtenaw County is on pace to house all veterans by the end of November 2015, with the hope of doing so by Veterans Day (Nov. 11). As of the end of September, 134 previously unhoused vets moved into their own places while 19 still awaited permanent housing.

The Washtenaw Zero:2016 campaign has an additional goal of ending chronic homelessness in the county by

expansion participatory. His concept derived from the 2012 Papillion Project, a City Blight Busters community engagement effort in the Brightmor neighborhood of Detroit, in which ancestral art was formed into butterflies and used to decorate neighborhood homes.

Miller scavenged boards from houses being demolished and recycled the wood into large butterflies that exhibit attendees were invited to paint. Once they dried, Miller enhanced them into true works of art and added them to the exhibit. The Jackson children were among many who added butterflies to a POP-X keepsake mural.

Tyler Smith popped into the show with his friend Molly on their way back from lunch. He especially liked *The Picnic*, an entry composed of picnic-themed items by 30 female artists from the Ann Arbor Art Center. "*The Picnic* feels like fantasy. It is reminiscent of *The Dinner Party* [an iconic 70s feminist art installation by Judy Chicago]," said Tyler.

Ann Mulhern, an artist with the Potter's Guild, was one of *The Picnics'* collaborators and was also on-hand as a docent. She was especially impressed that the 30 women were able to combine their works so beautifully into one "without killing each other."

## the end of 2016. As of September 3, 100 chronically homeless individuals had been housed since January of 2015 and 21 remained on the waitlist. If the current rate is sustained, that goal will also be achieved ahead of schedule. You can follow and donate toward progress at the website: [WashtenawZero2016.com](http://WashtenawZero2016.com).

With an eye to the future, capacity for rapid re-housing is also in place. (It is not uncommon for newly-housed individuals to lose their first apartment or two.) Next up – ending family and youth homelessness.



## Event honors vets and raises funds to room families of VA patients

by Susan Beckett

Veterans, their families and community supporters will head to Hill Auditorium on Veterans Day (Nov. 11) for a special program of music and storytelling centered on honoring veterans. The program is free but donations are encouraged and advance donations guarantee preferred seating. Donations of \$100 or more will be rewarded with a pre-show reception. The money raised will go toward building a Fisher House near the Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital so veterans undergoing medical treatment can be supported by family members.

A Fisher House is "a home away from home" for families that include a veteran who is receiving medical care at major military and VA medical centers. The homes are normally located within walking distance of the treatment facility or have transportation available.

Typically, the houses are 5,000- to 16,800-square-foot homes that are partially financed by the Fisher family and Fisher House Foundation. Each house is designed to provide eight to 21 suites. All are professionally furnished and decorated in the tone and style of the local region. The houses can accommodate 16 to 42 family members. They feature a common kitchen, laundry facilities, spacious dining room and an inviting living room with library and toys for children. The newest houses are 100 percent disabled-accessible and include elevators. A Fisher House is a temporary residence and is not a treatment facility, hospice or counseling center.

Greta Krapohl, whose 20 years as an Army nurse included a stint at the White House, will be one of the storytellers at the "Service Above Self - Honoring Our Veterans" show.



Shockingly, although Michiganders account for 10 percent of servicemen, there is not a single Fisher House here while Florida has six and California has five. There are 65 Fisher Houses located on 24 military installations and 24 VA medical centers. Many more houses are under construction or in design.

"Whether it was fighting simultaneous wars on two continents and two oceans, standing up to communist aggression in Asia, or meeting the 21<sup>st</sup> century's challenges of terrorist attacks, fleeing refugees, and aggressive international rivals, no state has done more to assure our national security than the men and women of Michigan," noted Ashish Sarkar, president of the Rotary Club of Ann Arbor.

The construction of a Michigan Fisher House would be a fitting recognition of

this tradition and there are good reasons to locate it here. The Ann Arbor VA hospital has specialists and equipment not found at other VA facilities in the state and region and consequently draws patients from many miles away.

Some of the more than 65,000 vets who receive treatment at this hospital each year simply have an appointment but cannot make the roundtrip in one day. The vet can stay in a room at the "Hoptel" – quarters within the VA – but the family member who helps with the drive or needs to hear the doctor's instructions for follow-up care has nowhere to stay unless a nearby hotel room can be procured. Even if money for a hotel is not a problem, events like Art Fair, conventions and home football games periodically fill every hotel room in the area. The burden on families whose veteran requires a lengthy stay is

even greater.

"It would have been nice to have my family visit more while I was at the VA, but they all live three hours or more away and I didn't want them to worry about staying in a motel," said Martin, a 66-year-old vet who was at the VA for two months while receiving radiation treatment for cancer.

Once it is built, stays at the Fisher House will be totally free, with even meals provided, much as the Ronald McDonald house serves the families of children undergoing treatment at U-M's Mott. The VA will provide a house manager and cover some of the routine costs.

Community/VA liaison Randy Ritter retired from the VA two years ago and is now free to assist with garnering

**see SERVICE, page 11**



### St. Francis of Assisi PARISH

A Proud supporter of Groundcover News

"Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace."

Pope Francis

#### Mass Schedule

**Saturday**

5:00 p.m.

**Sunday**

7:00 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 12:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m.

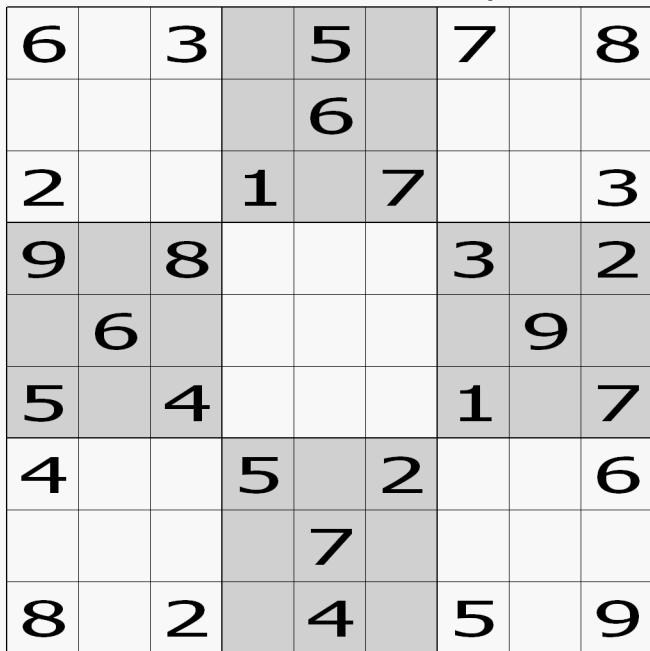
St Francis of Assisi Parish  
2250 East Stadium Blvd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
(734) 769-2550  
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### Strange (but Mostly True) Stories About a Mother and her Daughter • Cy Klone © 2012 & 2015



# PUZZLES

## Sudoku ★★★★ 4puz.com



Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

## Cryptoquote:

**CVHQ SVH RHOUE SJHOSB  
LF FLDQHI, SVH COJ LFQ'S  
MZHJ AMJ SVH ZHSHJOQF,  
MJ SVH AOGLXB. LS'F ETFS  
FSOJSLQD.**

– WOJX GOJXOQSHF

Clue: E = V

## Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

**All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:**

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1, or the face value of the paper. I agree not to ask for more than face value or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell

to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to:  
**contact@groundcovernews.com**  
**734-707-9210**

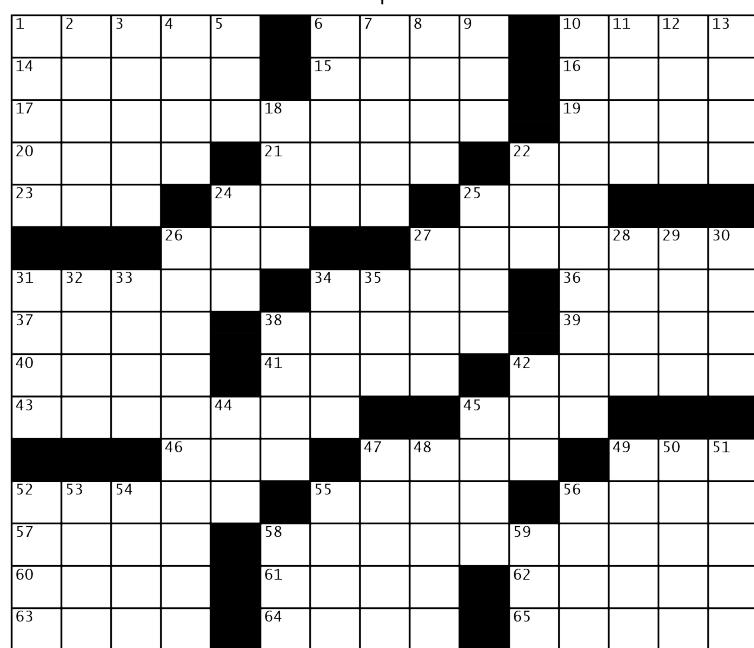
### ACROSS

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- Ms. Horne
- Sharpen
- Habituate
- Inventor Elisha
- Conceal
- Excessive talker
- Mr. Bana
- Make furrows
- "\_\_\_\_ of the Earth"
- Cogs
- International group (abbr.)
- Additional
- Thick liquid
- Encountered
- Power generator
- Mercury, for example
- Suffering
- \_\_\_\_\_ a heart!
- Kiln
- \_\_\_\_\_ blanche
- Mr. Shepard
- Improvised singing
- Michigan city
- Actress Sally
- Menaces
- Poetic contraction
- Edible grass
- Cabbage
- Statewide law enforcement agency (abbr.)
- Wash
- Price
- King beaters
- Audio reflection
- Disco decoration
- Sonny's partner
- \_\_\_\_\_ 51
- Song of yesteryear
- Sharp
- Reject
- Attack
- Musical speed
- \_\_\_\_ Gay
- Vehicles
- Bird
- Pronoun
- Crazy ones
- Piece of music
- Immature lice
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wednesday
- Ambulation substitute
- Engage
- Modify
- Engineering college
- Lose rigidity
- Word following green or black
- Fish
- Mr. Krupa
- Disneyland feature
- Ms. Hayworth
- Account
- Without corners
- Sunder
- Superlative
- Every
- Monarch
- Friends
- Appendage
- Ms. Blanchett
- Price
- Affirmative
- Pancake topping
- Ms. Carpenter
- Set
- Many
- Repudiate
- Cay
- Guitarist Jeff
- Sorenness
- "... of \_\_\_\_\_ I sing"
- Discharge
- \_\_\_\_\_, Baker,...
- Satirical magazine
- Roy

### DOWN

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- 65

### Car parts



- Ambulation substitute
- Engage
- Modify
- Engineering college
- Lose rigidity
- Word following green or black
- Fish
- Mr. Krupa
- Disneyland feature
- Ms. Hayworth
- Account
- Without corners
- Sunder
- Superlative
- Every
- Monarch
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- Repudiate
- Cay
- Guitarist Jeff
- Sorenness
- "... of \_\_\_\_\_ I sing"
- Discharge
- \_\_\_\_\_, Baker,...
- Satirical magazine
- Roy

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond



## Bethlehem United Church of Christ

423 S. 4th Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

734-665-6149

*Bethlehem Church is the home of the Groundcover office*

**Sunday Worship Times**

8:30 am and 10:00 am

**Sunday school at 10:15 am**

**Fellowship Hour follows each service**

### November Community Events – Welcome!

- Nov. 1 (Sun.) Totenfest Memorial Services, 8:30 am and 10:00 am  
 Nov. 8 (Sun.) Concert, 2 pm, U.S. Coast Guard Academy Cadet Chorale  
 Nov. 10 (Tue.) Hops & Hallelujahs, alternative worship at Conor O'Neill's  
 Nov. 13 (Fri.) Fall Luncheon and Bazaar, 9:30-2:00  
 Nov. 14 (Sat.) Concert, 3 pm, Dashon Burton, Baritone  
 Nov. 20 (Fri.) German Pretzel Sales, 11am-2pm, \$1 or \$10 dozen  
 Nov. 22 (Sun.) Concert, 3 pm, Audi Vocem, Choral concert  
 Nov. 26 (Sun.) Happy Thanksgiving!

### VISIT US ON-LINE AT



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[www.pinterest.com/  
bethlehemuccA2](http://www.pinterest.com/bethlehemuccA2)



[www.youtube.com/user/  
BethlehemChurchA2](http://www.youtube.com/user/BethlehemChurchA2)



[bethlehem-ucc.org](http://bethlehem-ucc.org)

## From musician to composer – a homeschool musical journey

by Isaac Weiss  
Groundcover Contributor

On May 19, 2015, I played my last concert with National Homeschool Music Ensembles (NHME).

I spent several years of my life with NHME. Apparently, it's very common for homeschoolers to be involved with music – I guess when you have time on your hands and an untamed creative spirit, activities like music push all the right buttons. At any rate, there is a high enough concentration of homeschool music programs in the state of Michigan that they meet for their own juried Solo & Ensemble festivals, have their own All-State Honors groups, and in general do everything that the public school music programs – which won't have anything to do with them – do.

Even among homeschool music programs, though, NHME is unique.

*“Excellence is not an act, but a habit.”* This is a quote from Aristotle, but also from Donald S. Dobrosky, or, as we call NHME's white-haired director, “Mr. Doby.” As the founder, CEO, and director of nearly all of the several ensembles that make up NHME, Dobrosky has painstakingly maintained the program's affordability to remarkable levels, even as his peers' programs across the state have grown in cost. That's how my parents were able to enroll their five children, opening up a wondrous world of ensemble performance to me and my younger sisters.

Playing music is always a special experience, but nothing compares to playing with a group. It's the community aspect of it, as much as the incredible sounds that can be produced, that I love – every musician having a vital role, doing his or her own part while relying on the others to do theirs – and all *together*. If one person gets caught up in his or her own playing and loses focus on blending with the group, it simply doesn't work – the music sounds ugly and falls apart. Only when all are paying careful attention to each other – including the conductor – can something marvelous be created.

I have never been able to decide which I love more – the sound of a string ensemble (orchestra) or a wind ensemble (concert band). I played in both under the direction of Mr. Doby, ultimately becoming concertmaster (first-chair violin) of the string orchestra.

One day, while I was putting my clarinet away after band rehearsal, he came up to me with a proposition: “How'd you like to write a march for the band?”

I had done some composing and ar-



Weiss and his teacher Donald Dobrosky share a laugh at a National Homeschool Music Ensemble rehearsal.

ranging before – NHME's orchestra had actually performed one of my compositions – but I had never attempted to write anything for such a large and complex instrumentation as the concert band. Neither had Mr. Doby, so I was in good company. But he *had* had a march kicking around in his head for the past twenty years (!) that he'd never gotten around to putting down on paper, and he figured I might be interested...

Boy, would I!

Studying the form of classical marches by Sousa and others (first strain, second strain, trio, dogfight, grandioso), emailing files back and forth, and meeting in person biweekly (with a computer and a piano in close proximity), we gradually cranked it out over the course of six months. He'd give me a melody, I'd give a harmony; he'd give me a bass line, I'd give him a countermelody. There were disagreements, of course: What should the rhythm be here? Should the trombone countermelody start here, or later? Sometimes we went with his ideas, sometimes with mine. The result was undeniably better than either of our conceptions could have been alone.

As the deadline for our spring concert approached, we turned to arranging the parts for all the individual instruments. We printed out the latest revision every couple weeks and rehearsed it with the group. Positive feedback ensued – apparently the march was one of the more fun ones the band had played. We also finalized the title, derived from NHME's motto: *Excellence*.

Our concert was May 19, 2015. It was my own farewell to NHME; the next year I was to devote to college preparation. I was anticipating two highlights of the night: playing Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* with the string orchestra, and presenting the world premiere of Excellence March.

The concert band, Mr. Doby's original pride and joy, is always the last act of

the evening. Last of all, we were to perform the march I had co-written with our band director.

He took the microphone, faced the audience, and gave the background for the piece, explaining how the first strains of the march had been in his head since the mid-1990s, indicating me in my seat with the clarinets. The audience knew me from the previous year – Mr. Doby had had a health crisis, I had been called on to temporarily take over teaching the beginning strings group, and I had conducted them in the concert. (I was also the concertmaster of the string orchestra, of course.)

“Without Isaac, this march you're about to hear does not happen,” he said. Then came something I had not expected: he

## National rally outed addiction

by Liz Audette  
Groundcover Contributor

On October 4, 2015 the silence ended. That was the day of the UNITE to Face Addiction rally on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Tens of thousands of people in long-term recovery from substance use disorders came out and relinquished their anonymity so they could break the stigma of addiction.

They were joined by recovery allies and grieving parents and spouses who had lost their loved ones to the disease of addiction. The bottom line is that everyone is sick of seeing addicts die, one every four minutes to be precise. Other issues addressed were the decriminalization of addiction, the failed “War on Drugs,” Congressional Senate bill 524: Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (C.A.R.A.), and demanding insurance company compliance with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act.

The rally lasted five hours. It was one famous person after another speaking, singing and supporting this movement,

invited me to the front of the stage, shook my hand, wished me well in my future career, and presented me with my own conductor's baton. Overwhelmed, I returned to my seat, put the gift-wrapped baton on my music stand, and picked up my clarinet, ready to play.

The piece was well-received. To put it another way, the crowd loved it – in fact, the crowd went wild. The takeaway was that we had written a good march. But we weren't finished yet.

Work continued. A revised version was soon performed in a joint concert with the Adrian City Band. And we're still not done tweaking it. When the march is completed to both our satisfaction, we're going to reach out to some music publishers and see if we can sell it.

I've left NHME now, though I'll definitely drop by in the future. Mr. Doby has invited me to conduct a clinic at some point, perhaps even before I start studying at college. I'll certainly show up for concerts – I still have sisters in the various ensembles.

But no matter where I go in the world, I will always be proud to say that I was a homeschooled musician in Don Dobrosky's program.

*For a recording of “Excellence March” or sheet music for your own band, please email isaacweiss@gmail.com.*

including phenomenal performances by artists like Steven Tyler, Joe Walsh and Sheryl Crow. Dr. Oz and Paul Simon led the crowd in the new UNITE to Face Addiction theme song. President Obama's videotaped message to the UNITE crowd detailed what his administration wants to do about the current addiction epidemic. Peruse the [FacingAddiction.org](http://FacingAddiction.org) website to get a sense of the power and depth of emotion that day.

This rally stemmed from the 2013 documentary, *The Anonymous People*, which can be seen on Netflix. The whole point of this film is that there are 23 million people in recovery and they are not standing up for the 22 million that are still out there using and in need of help. At one point in the movie they refer to the AIDS epidemic and the signs the LGBT community used when they rallied: SILENCE = DEATH. That's exactly what been happening in the recovery community. Our silence has cost hundreds of thousands of lives over the years.

see OUTING, page 11

## Positive Affirmations

*by Richard Lackley*

*Vendor #156*

**I am Somebody**

**I was made from Love**

**I was created from the**

**Master above**

**Sometimes I don't know**

**Where I'm Going**

**I ask God to direct me**

**In the Right Direction**

**I accept me, I accept who I am**

**I have feelings, I have a Right**

**To be here**

**I am all Colors, I am all Races,**

**I am all Sexes,**

**Which describes me as Universal**

**I am the Universe**

**I have Pride and Dignity**

**I walk Proud and Pretty**

**Like I own the World**

**I am Somebody Because**

**I smile I have a happy smile**

**I smile because I'm Happy**

**I smile because I'm Free**

**I am somebody today,**

**Tomorrow, and Forever**

## Washtenaw County Zero:2016 Initiative Update

In January 2015, Washtenaw County joined 75 other communities across the country when it launched its participation in the Zero:2016 initiative, a national movement to end veteran and chronic homelessness by the end of 2016.



### Overall Goal

- House 153 Veterans by 12/31/2015 and
- House 121 chronically homeless by 12/31/2016

### Two months to go!

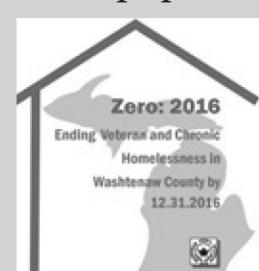
As of September reporting, here's where we stand:

- House 19 Veterans by 12/31/2015 and
- House 21 chronically homeless by 12/31/2016.

We're excited for the progress, but it comes down to financial support to help with move-in costs, and finding units committed to our effort. To donate, offer units, and follow monthly progress visit our website: [www.washtenawzero2016.com](http://www.washtenawzero2016.com)

### What is Zero?

The goal of Zero:2016 is to end homelessness by reaching a "functional zero" count. Functional zero is reached when, at any point in time, the number of people (veterans or chronic) experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness will be no greater than the current monthly housing placement rate for that population.



## Outing addiction to end epidemic

continued from page 9



60 locals joined thousands in D.C. to UNITE around ending addiction stigma and promoting medical treatment.

In Washtenaw County 32 people died from overdoses in 2012; last year, 65 died. 2015 is looking to match, if not overtake, 2014's death toll.

How did Ann Arbor and the surrounding towns play into this whole rally? We have an enormous recovery community in Washtenaw County, due largely to the fact that we have two major treatment facilities here. People with substance use disorders come to seek treatment and then stay. So it wasn't too hard to fill a bus full of people and head to Washington, D.C.

We had students from the Collegiate Recovery Programs at the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University, folks employed at recovery organizations like Home of New Vision, Dawn Farm and The Ann Arbor Women's Group, people associated with Maple Rock, volunteers from the Washtenaw Recovery Advocacy Project (WRAP) and a myriad of other people in recovery and recovery allies. There were 46 on the bus and another group that flew there, so the total was closer to 60. We wore t-shirts that depicted that we were from Ann Arbor, in recovery and happy. We chose safety green, a neon color, so we wouldn't be missed. We are proud to be from Ann Arbor and we are proud to be in recovery.

The group that flew went early to be a part of the Fed Up rally. Fed Up is an organization that is, well, fed up with

## Cryptoquote Solution

**When the peace treaty is signed, the war isn't over for the veterans, or the family. It's just starting.**

— Karl Marlantes

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8	3	2	6	4	1	5	7	9

## "Service Above Self" veteran event

continued from page 7

community support for a Fisher House. Asked why he would take this on in retirement, he replied, "It's a continuation of my 38 years of service to vets. Knowing there is an unmet need and that I have the ability to help."

Fortunately, Rotary of Ann Arbor recently approached the VA asking about ways they could help out. Upon learning about the Fisher House project, they jumped in with both feet and planned the Veterans Day event, "Service Above Self – Honoring Our Vets," the brainchild of member Brad Chick.

"My dad was a vet and we moved him here from California for the last few years of his life – he was pretty beat-up – a paraplegic, and he needed lots of help. I was in and out of the VA with him and in the process gained a deep respect for the people who served," said Chick.

"We have the ball that drops on New Year's Eve, fireworks on the Fourth of July... but we don't do anything for Veterans Day," Chick continued. "I'd like to see this become a nationally recognized event – a poster child for due respect for the Armed Forces."

"Last year, Art Holst addressed Rotary and blew my wife Karen Kerr and me away and we thought – the rest of the world needs to hear this guy before it's too late. He's 94 years old and one of the great human beings on the planet as well as an amazing speaker. He mentioned that one life-long dream of his was to speak at Hill Auditorium," Chick said.

Art Holst will realize that dream on November 11. Holst, a former NFL referee and experienced story-teller, will anchor and coach the veterans who will share entertaining stories from their time of service. Veterans of four different eras will each tell a story. Greta Krapohl's 20 years in the Army Nurse



Brendan LeJeune, who served as a Marine in Fallujah, Iraq, will tell his story at Hill Auditorium on Veterans Day.

Corps included a stint at the White House and aboard Air Force One. Brendan LeJeune served as a Marine in Fallujah, Iraq. Robert Fletcher fought in Korea as part of the last all-black regiment and spent three years in a Chinese prisoner of war camp there.

There will be patriotic musical interludes between stories. The musicians will be the University of Michigan Alumni Band, Katherine Larsen, the Concordia University Choir and the U-M a capella group Dicks and Janes. The Mandell and Madeleine Berman Foundation collaborated with the Rotary Club of Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan Veterans Student Council, Concordia University and others to produce this event to honor veterans, share their stories and raise awareness of the effort to build a local Fisher House. This kicks off a year-long Rotary campaign to raise the eight million dollars needed to establish a Fisher House near the Ann Arbor VA Hospital.

"Service Above Self – Honoring Our Veterans" will start at 6:30 on November 11, 2015 at Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University, Ann Arbor. For detailed program information or to make a donation, visit [vetsatthehill.org](http://vetsatthehill.org) or call (734) 646-9372.

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## Brined and Grilled Turkey



by Bert and Kathy Moberg  
Groundcover Contributors

Grilled turkey is sublime – succulent with a smoky flavor and crispy skin. It feeds a large crowd and leaves your oven free for other dishes. It is a Thanksgiving tradition at our house. A 12- to 14-pound turkey works well on our Weber grill but if your grill is big enough you can use a larger turkey.

1. Thaw and rinse turkey.
2. Dissolve 2 cups kosher salt (not table salt) in 2 gal water. Place turkey in huge stockpot or in a very large plastic bag inside a cooler. Pour salt water over turkey, adding more water if needed to cover. The turkey will float, so weigh it down. We place a liter pop bottle full of ice water on top of the turkey to submerge it.
3. Place in cold garage with ice packs overnight or 12 hours, changing icepacks as needed to keep cool.
4. Rinse turkey very well and pat dry. Tie wings and legs with twine to the body so they do not burn. Place a couple peeled, halved or quartered onions inside cavity. We also add some garlic cloves, a quartered lemon or orange and fresh rosemary (discard before carving).
5. Place turkey on a roast rack. (Some cookbooks suggest a disposable roasting pan if you do not have a rack for your grill.) While handling the turkey in the house, I place this on a jellyroll pan to catch drips, spices, etc. It also helps for transporting to the grill. Rub all over with olive oil and sprinkle very liberally with garlic powder, black pepper and Herbs de Provence (or spices of your own choosing).
6. The grill should be prepared for indirect heat – that is, the coals stacked up on the two sides and not under the turkey. This is easiest to do if you have grill rails or charcoal baskets.
7. Start with turkey upside down and turn halfway through cooking. Add more briquettes or wood chips, if necessary.
8. Weber's *Big Book of Grilling* suggests 1½ to 2½ hours for a 10- to 11-pound turkey, and 2½ to 3 hours for 12-14 pounds. Keep the weather in mind, too. It will take longer on a cold, windy day and shorter on a warm day. The turkey is done when a meat thermometer, inserted into the thick part of the meat away from bone, reads 185°F. Allow to rest before carving.

# Holiday Savings Event

## Help Us Help Kids!

Give back to the children in our community this holiday season with the Kiwanis Thrift Sale's annual Holiday Savings Event!

**Downtown Location:**  
December 4, 5 & 12

**West Location:**  
Every Friday & Saturday – November through mid-December

**Kiwanis Thrift Sale**

Kiwanis Thrift Sale  
Sat. 9am-12pm  
Washington at First St.

Kiwanis Thrift Sale West  
Fri. & Sat. 10am -1pm  
102 N. Staebler Rd.

like us on facebook [www.a2kiwanis.org](http://www.a2kiwanis.org)

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1/8	\$89.95	\$129.95
1/6	\$129.95	\$165.95
1/4	\$159.95	\$215.95
1/2	\$299.95	\$399.95
Full Page	\$495.95	\$669.95

Approx. Size
3.5 X 2
2.5 X 6.5 or 5 X 3.25
5 X 5
5 X 6.5
5 X 14 or 10 X 6.5
10 X 14

## PACKAGE PRICING

Three Months/Three Issues: 15% off  
Six Months/Six Issues: 25% off  
Full Year/Twelve Issues: 35% off  
Additional 20% off ads with coupons